

able to pay our troops, buy supplies and give them shelter.

Specifically, the facts show that without passing this bill, our military is slated to run out of money for Iraq operations in January.

What does this mean? It means the curtailment of training and equipment maintenance activities in the United States to better prepare our troops.

It means that contracts will be severely delayed or canceled to provide body armor, armored vehicles, jammers, and radios needed in the field to keep these guys not only protecting our security but protecting their own lives.

But the politicians in Washington, many of whom have never worn the uniform and have done a heck of a job to avoid service, now stand proud and mighty saying they are working for these troops safety.

And they will again use our troops as a prop to make their so-called case.

But the facts are the troops are the last things on the mind of the White House and this shameful Republican Congress.

This Republican Congress and this Bush White House has continually underfunded our troops and used them as a political prop.

Remember "Mission Accomplished" anyone?!

If Congress cared about our military so, outside of props and campaign commercials, why is this bill 3 months behind schedule?

Why is this bill being used to provide a multi-billion gift to the nation's biggest gas companies, by allowing them to drill in Alaska?

The Republican Leadership attached the can't pass ANWR provision to this must pass bill in the ultimate example of politics gone wrong.

By not giving us the ability to vote on ANWR alone, this does not mean that we approve of this misguided policy.

I thought they were making enough profits off Americans at the pump now—but Congress and the White House think they can make more money for the ExxonMobils of the world—this time off the backs and lives of our troops fighting overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This is the most shameful act I have seen in the most corrupt Congress in American history.

This year America has seen the Republican Majority Leader of the House of Representatives TOM DELAY be indicted on money laundering charges.

America has seen the Republican Majority Leader of the Senate BILL FRIST under investigation for criminal charges—charges like those that sent Martha Stewart to jail.

America has seen a senior Republican Congressman from California, Randy Cunningham, take over \$2 million in bribes through war-profiteering using information he gathered on the House Intelligence Committee.

He sold this confidential information to the highest bidder, but this Congress won't even seize his 6-figure, taxpayer-financed annual pension.

America has seen the U.S. Congress put up for sale to the highest bidder by people like Jack Abramoff and Mike Scanlon.

But tonight, we are seeing something far worse and far more depraved, the complete politicization of our troops, serving in war time, to provide a boon to the oil and gas industry.

There is more shame to go around Congress now than indictments, and that is saying something today in Washington. The Republicans are holding funding for our military, funding for body armor, funding for security for military personnel hostage to keep the world safe for the profits of big energy.

And for that you pay \$2.35 a gallon for gas!

Regardless of what one thinks of the war, we need to protect our sons and daughters fighting over there.

But again, this bill and this Administration falls short, using politics over policy; using political consultants over generals to fight a war.

Who loses? Our troops lose. Their families lose. America loses.

But this bill again reflects the warped priorities of the Bush Administration.

While I am angry about this process and this bill, I will reluctantly vote for it as our men and women in military need these funds immediately—even with these shameful additions.

I won't play the Republicans' game and hold our troops hostage, but I hope the Republicans in Congress and the White House who use our military as a political sound bite or tool to pass their own unrelated items recognize they represent the worst of America.

The blood of American men and women is on their hands for their politics of delay, diversion and division.

I yield back what shame is left in this corrupt institution.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2863,
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AP-
PROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, America's servicemen and servicewomen are the bravest, most valiant and skillful soldiers on earth and because of them, our military is the best in history. As the daughter and brother of war veterans, I am particularly supportive of our Nation's soldiers. The men and women serving America deserve the full support of our Nation. This is why it is particularly distasteful and dangerous when elected officials in Washington play politics with legislation that affects our troops serving right now in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

It is tremendously disappointing that the leadership from the other side of the aisle has decided to play politics with this bill. They have taken a straightforward bill to fund our military, knowing that it is destined to pass, and hung politically controversial and unacceptable legislation to it. They have given us a withering Christmas tree.

This is politics at its distasteful worst, and it must be rejected. I am voting "no" on this bill because of the bad governance it represents and because of the bad policy attached at the last minute.

Opening part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling creates environmental harm in pursuit of a band-aid for our Nation's energy problems. Instead of putting adequate resources into developing alternative energy sources, which could solve our long-term

problems, some in the Congress and the administration find it easier to go rushing into a treasured wildlife sanctuary for a short-term stopgap.

They were unable to get what they want through the normal legislative process. So, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle used a ploy—they attached their legislation to a defense bill, literally in the middle of the night.

As if that weren't bad enough, this bill has also been saddled with an irresponsible gift to drugmakers, shielding them from liability and giving victims only phantom protections. This is another proposal that did not go through the regular legislative process and could not have passed on its own merits.

Added on to all of that is a one percent across the board cut that will affect homeland security, education and health care programs. It will even chop \$4 billion from the defense budget that supports our troops. Again, this did not go through the regular process and could not have passed on its own merits.

Though I cannot vote for this bill on principle, I am glad that it includes the restoration of \$125 million for sick and injured 9/11 responders. The money was taken back from the responders at the president's request in the Labor-HHS appropriations bill we passed recently. My colleagues in the New York delegation and I worked hard to ensure that the 9/11 heroes can keep the assistance many of them so desperately still need. We were informed shortly before Thanksgiving that the Speaker would find a way to salvage the funds, and I thank him for following through with this action.

Despite the positive aspects of this bill, the other side of the aisle has attached—literally at the last minute—many unrelated items, which makes it impossible to support its passage. Such actions shouldn't be tolerated by this House. I wish to be associated with the comments of my friend and colleague, Mr. OBEY, who has spoken strongly in opposition to the process under which this final bill was created.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 1932,
DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately for the American people, this reconciliation spending conference report arrives back in this Chamber substantially unimproved from its original form.

Notwithstanding modest revisions in areas like food stamps, low income heating assistance and physician reimbursement under Medicare, this package represents a warped vision for America: take from those with the least, give to those with the most and tell our children they will have to pay for it all later.

It would be a disgraceful document at any time of the year, but seems particularly Scrooge-like during this Holiday season.

Take Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which this conference report slashes by \$6.9 billion. The cost-sharing and premium increases mandated by this legislation fall entirely on the

poor—who have no other way to access basic health care for themselves and their families.

Or the \$2.6 billion in cuts for child support enforcement, foster care and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), designed to assist single parents, foster children and the disabled. Setting aside the immorality of deliberately targeting the most vulnerable among us, child support enforcement dollars actually save the government money through reduced public assistance costs.

Then there's higher education, whose \$12.7 billion cut accounts for about a third of this \$39.7 billion conference agreement. Though \$1.6 billion less than the House's original draconian proposal, \$12.7 billion remains the single largest cut to student aid in the forty year history of the Higher Education Act. The resulting increase in interest rates, fees and other charges represents an unprecedented disinvestment in our students and their families—at precisely the time our young people are going to need that education the most.

We already know that college graduates earn \$1 million more over their lifetimes than their cohorts who do not attend college, which gives taxpayers a tremendous return on their federal financial aid investment. Additionally, over the course of this past year scores of CEOs from across the country have repeatedly told this Congress that a highly educated workforce is a critical prerequisite for maintaining America's competitive advantage in the knowledge, information and innovation economy of 21st century.

Given these realities, it is the height of penny wise, pound foolish bean-counting to put college even further out of reach for the generation of Americans who will have to face these challenges. Yet that's precisely what this conference report does.

Mr. Speaker, while I commend the conferees for embracing substantial reforms I have long advocated regarding the need to end 9.5 percent guaranteed floor loans and strengthen oversight of schools acting as lenders, this progress does not begin to redeem the damage done by the rest of the legislation.

The \$40 billion in spending cuts tonight's proponents take such pride in pronouncing are in fact dwarfed by \$110 billion in tax cuts this same Congress proposes to enact this year—tax cuts whose benefits flow disproportionately to the wealthiest in our society.

That's right: When all is said and done, the so-called Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 and its accompanying tax legislation will actually increase the deficit by at least \$70 billion over the next five years.

Mr. Speaker, this fiscal policy is irresponsible and it is unjust. I urge my colleagues to vote no.

BORDER PROTECTION, ANTITERRORISM, AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION CONTROL ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4437) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to

strengthen enforcement of the immigration laws, to enforce border security, and for other purposes:

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005.

The bill before us today is an unprecedented assault on both documented and undocumented immigrants. It creates policies that are burdensome and that threaten those legitimately seeking asylum.

It also creates new burdens on business. For example, the bill requires all employers to verify within two years that all of their new hires are in the U.S. legally. Those employers would have to verify the immigration status of all employees within six years. Not only is it extremely discriminatory to question the legal status of every new employee, this verification system also places an extremely unreasonable burden on the private sector—both large and small businesses. Instead of creating a new level of bureaucracy for our business owners to have to follow, we just should enforce the laws that we already have in place.

The bill also expands mandatory detention of immigrants, including women and children who come to the United States seeking asylum. Some of these people have been subject to crimes inconceivable to most Americans, and could be subject to even more egregious violations should they be denied asylum. We should not pass legislation that prevents refugees and others seeking persecution from finding safety in our country.

The bill also includes a provision requiring the construction of security fencing along portions of our southern border that have high rates of illegal border crossing, with one of these sections being in my home state of New Mexico. This provision alone creates a false sense of security. Building this fence will not stop the flow of undocumented immigrants into this country—it will only force them to take another route. Additionally, we are not in a position to know what the environmental impact would be on a project of this size. It could severely affect those millions of acres of land surrounding the border, as well as the wildlife living upon it.

This bill misses the mark completely, by its arbitrary and burdensome provisions. We all agree that we need to reform our immigration system. However, Congress missed an opportunity to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF DR.
VANG POBZEB

HON. MARK GREEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to commemorate the life of Dr. Vang Pobzeb, an extraordinary man who recently passed away on August 23, 2005 after a life of passionate service to human rights and Hmong people across the globe.

Dr. Pobzeb began his activism in the mid 1970s and was among the first to achieve national recognition in the Hmong American Community. In 1987 he founded the Lao Human Rights Council—an organization de-

voted to improving the living conditions of Hmong people both in Laos and the U.S. Dr. Pobzeb was a tireless advocate for a people and culture that faced tremendous persecution, and he took every opportunity to remind the international community of the plight of the Hmong people in Laos. I was proud to work together with him, time and time again, in this fight.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to commemorate the life of such an incredible man. Dr. Pobzeb was truly an exemplar of compassion and dedication, and on behalf of the citizens of Wisconsin's Eighth Congressional District, I offer my condolences to his family, and pay tribute to his life of activism and sacrifice.

RECOGNIZING THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF SAINT JOHNS, MICHIGAN

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 150th anniversary of the founding of Saint Johns, Michigan. Saint Johns was established by John Swegles and a team of state officials and land speculators who purchased and platted Saint Johns based on information about a new railroad depot in Michigan. These speculators selected the site in 1853 looking to create a new town along the Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad, however it was not until 1856 that the railroad arrived in Saint Johns.

Today, Saint Johns is affectionately known as Mint City, USA. The State of Michigan produces nearly enough mint flavor to make 6.9 billion sticks of chewing gum each year, the majority of which is produced in and around Saint Johns in Clinton County, MI. Every August, Saint Johns' mint heritage is celebrated with an annual mint festival.

Mr. Speaker, the City of Saint Johns has a rich history and a vibrant future. I ask all my colleagues to join me and the citizens of Saint Johns in recognizing the sesquicentennial of this historic Michigan city.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2863, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in reluctant support for the conference report on the Fiscal Year 2006 Department of Defense Appropriations bill.

As a veteran of the U.S. Army and as the Representative for Fort Bragg, Pope Air Force Base and numerous Guard and Reserve units, I strongly support our men and women in uniform and their families. This bill contains needed funding for such necessary items as the military pay raise, body armor for our troops in Iraq and vehicle armor for the vehicles that carry them. The base bill is important legislation, and I strongly support it.